

Mendocino Beacon
May 8, 1937:

Many Attend Festival over the Week End

Much Comment Heard on Fine Program Sunday

The Mendocino coast celebrated its first annual Rhododendron festival Saturday and Sunday, May 1st and 2nd, the exercises being conducted in the beautiful Van Damme park, where a grandstand and seating arrangements made to accommodate a large crowd, had been installed for the occasion.

The grandstand had been beautifully decorated with a profusion of the lovely flowers which had inspired the holding of the festival. The alders, which are just coming into full leaf and beauty, formed a background of exquisite loveliness[sic], a fitting setting for the coronation of the festival queen, Dorothy Virginia Dutton, of Greenwood.

The weather on both days was sunny and perfect for an outdoor gathering such as this, and brought together a large number of people, which though largely coast residents, still contained a goodly number of valley people who seemed to enjoy themselves and gave opportunity for a good deal of social visiting.

Long before 1 o'clock cars began to arrive at the park laden with pleasure seekers, eager to see the queen and enjoy the fine program of music and song which had been prepared for the occasion. CCC boys from Russian Gulch park handled the traffic in an orderly manner.

B.L. Elliott, president of the Coast Chamber of Commerce, acted as a master of ceremonies at the opening of the program introducing different committees who came before the microphone and spoke a few words.

Dr. C.V. Whited gave the address of welcome which was heard clearly and distinctly. James C. Hurley, a former coast resident, was called to the stand and delivered a short forceful address. Mr. Cruzane, representing the Oakland Enquirer, and Albert H. Marmin, Fort Bragg manager of the Shell Oil Co, also spoke in a complimentary manner on the festival and attractions of the coast.

Selections by the Mendocino quartette, accordion solos by Mr. Del Querro of Fort Bragg, and vocal solos by Wm. Tregoning and Albert Marman were much enjoyed by the gathering.

Queen Dorothy entered the festival grounds riding in a float entirely covered with rhododendrons. She was surrounded by her attendants—a bevy of beautiful girls who had been chosen from the different localities participating in the festival.

Mrs. Fay Lamphier Daniels, formerly Miss America of 1925, was present, and after being introduced to the audience by Chairman Elliott, responded graciously, expressing her great pleasure at being present on such an auspicious occasion and the pleasure it gave her to crown the lovely queen. The queen was resplendent in a formal gown of white, with a cape fashioned of the lovely pink blossoms of the festival flower. A wreath of the same flowers formed the crown

which was placed on her head by Mrs. Daniels. The attendants were Miss Dollene Wilson of Point Arena, Miss Vera Stormer of Albion, Miss Grace Mattos of Mendocino, and Miss Elna Erickson of Fort Bragg. They surrounded the queen as she sat on the throne and made a lovely picture in their pastel gowns.

The Fort Bragg high school band under the direction of Charles Smith made an attractive appearance in snappy uniforms of purple and white, the school colors. Music was furnished by the band, lending a festive air to the proceedings. The log-swaing contest between Mr. Moretti and E. Crunk of Camp 19, Caspar woods, was won by Mr. Moretti. The prize for this contest was a pair of Makela-made logging boots. A tough pine log had been procured for the event. Mr. Moretti sawed through the log, about 30 inches in diameter, in four minutes.

The festival dances which were held Saturday evening simultaneously in Mendocino and Fort Bragg were largely attended. Many attended both affairs, journeying from one to the other during the evening. Music for the dances was furnished by coast orchestras—the Coast Harmonizers and the Harmony Boys.

Sunday dawned beautiful and clear, a perfect day for outdoor gatherings. Many took advantage of the beautiful weather to picnic in the park before the opening of the afternoon festivities. The crowd on Sunday was much greater than that of Saturday. Fully 3000 people entered the park on this day.

The Eagle band of Fort Bragg under the direction of Gus Roseman furnished stirring music for the occasion.

Noted guests who were present were called to the stand and asked to make short addresses. Among those who responded were former Superior Judge, Hugh Preston, Superior Judge W.D.L. Held, and District Attorney James Busch.

The queen and her attendants entered the stand and were presented with large bouquets of festival flowers.

A most enjoyable musical program was presented, consisting of vocal solos by Mr. Marmin of the Shell Oil Co., Ernest Piere, faculty member of the Fort Bragg high school, and other numbers equally enjoyable.

The screaming of a siren announced the finish of the relay race. Traffic Officer Joe Randolph led the way opening traffic for the runners as they sped on the 15-mile course. The relay was won by the runners from the Mendocino high school. The time was 1 hour, 15 minutes. The prizes offered for the team crossing the Caspar railroad track and also the tracks at Mendocino were won by the Mendocino team. After the finish of the relay race, the members of both teams were called to the stand and given a hand. The trophy which was awarded the winning team by the State Theater of Fort Bragg was presented during the evening performance at the theatre.

Through the cooperation of Supervisor Pesula, Roy Doolittle and Charles Buck, logs for the log chopping contest were brought in and placed before the stand. Charles Buck challenged any one to enter the race. Ed Law agreed to enter if given a time handicap due to the disparity in size. This Mr. Buck readily agreed to, and in spite of this won the contest easily, the time required by him to cut the log being 4 minutes. The prize offered in this contest was a pair of Hasel-made logging boots.

Other sports entered in the program was [sic] a sack race participated in by boys. This race was won by Bartolini of Fort Bragg; Bobby Cleary second; Johnnie Gordon third.

A pile of sand containing coins was the next event planned for the entertainment of the youngsters. Vernon Quail proved the best miner of the lot, securing 55 cents in coin in his frantic efforts to win the additional prize of \$1 offered by the committee. So many youngsters entered this event it was a mad scramble from start to finish for the four minutes allowed for the race.

Before Queen Dorothy and her attendants retired at the end of the festivities, Miss Grace Mattos, who represented Mendocino among the queen's attendants, was presented with a beautiful cup for having sold the greatest number of tickets in the queen contest.

Chairman Elliott and the committees who worked so assiduously for the success of the festival deserve great credit for their efforts. Events moved smoothly and every one seemed to enjoy the features to the utmost.

The blooming period of the rhododendron has been somewhat retarded by a late spring. The display of blooms in their widest area is hardly at its best yet. Two weeks or more of warm spring weather and these plants will be a mass of color and beauty, a gorgeous sight to behold.